

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK  
RARE BIRD RECORDS  
MARCH - MAY 2009

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Ruddy duck	1f	5/04	2 mi. Upstream Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter Maggie Burnett	rare
Yellow-crowned Night-heron	3*	5/04	RGV-Nature Trail	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
*1 adult 2 imm.					
Least grebe	1	4/03	RGV-river put-in	Peg Abbot	acc.
Little blue Heron	1	3/29	Rio Grande Vill.	John Jonker	rare
Gray hawk	2*	3/21-5/31	Cottonwood Camp	Many observers	unc.
*nesting pair					
	2*	3/22-5/31	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Many observers	unc.
*nesting pair					
Common black-hawk	2*	3/06-5/31	RGV COBH nest area	Many observers	rare
	1**	4/15	Colima Trail	Sean Fitzgerald	rare
*nesting pair    **unusual location - photos					
Golden eagle	1	3/24	Rte 13, MP 6-7	William Arnold	rare
	1	4/27	Dugout Wells	Nellie Hintz	rare
Crested caracara	1	3/29	Rio Grande Vill.	John Jonker	acc.
Merlin	1f	3/07	Persimmon Gap	Sheridan Coffey Martin Reid	rare
Virginia rail	1	4/20	RGV-wetland	David Elkowitz	rare
Upland sandpiper	1	4/16	RGV-store	Sean Fitzgerald	rare
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	4/30	RGV-river put-in	Jeanie & Dale Swant	acc.
Least tern	1	4/08	Boquillas Canyon	Lynn Ackley Sean, Peter, Jacob Davies	acc.
Ruddy ground-dove*	2	5/01	RGV-near black Hawk nest site	Carla Morey	acc

\*Texas Review Species: report to TBRC:Lockwood    Pending review

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Flammulated Owl	1	5/02	Boot Canyon	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
Burrowing owl	2	5/02	Rte 11, mp 21	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
White-eared Hummingbird*	2m,f	4/20	RGV-campground	James Liles	?spr.

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Dusky-capped Flycatcher*	1	5/03	Upper Pinnacles	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
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Couch's kingbird	1	4/15	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	4/21-28	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	5/04	Cottonwood Camp.	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
Couch's/tropical Kingbird	1	5/06	Dugout Wells	Rose & Dennis	rare
Eastern kingbird	1	4/30	RGV-campground	J&D Swant	rare
White-eyed vireo	1	3/04	RGV-Store	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	4/27	Dugout Wells	Nellie Hintz	rare
Black-capped vireo	1m	5/02	Basin Sewer ponds	Narca Moore-Craig	rare
	1m	5/02	Laguna/Basin Loop	Carla Morey	rare
	1m	5/19	Chisos Basin	Mark Flippo	rare
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	4/25	Dugout Wells	Rene Laubach	rare
Cassin's vireo	1	4/27	Lost Mine Trail	D&J Swant	rare
	1	4/29	Boot Canyon	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	5/02	Boot Canyon	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
	1	5/03	Pinnacles Tr.	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
Philadelphia vireo	1	4/29	Juniper Flat	Mark Flippo	rare
Red-eyed vireo	1m	5/05	RGV-Daniels road	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
Gray catbird	1	5/05	Panther Junction	Angie Dean	rare
W. Scrub-jay	1	3/04-09	Chisos Basin	Deborah Hurst	acc.

	1	3/24	Chisos Basin	Madeline Averett	acc.
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Red-breasted Nuthatch	1m	4/29	Pinnacles Tr.	Mark Flippo	spo.
Carolina wren	1	4/20	Santa Elena Cyn	JoAnn Baumgartner	rare
	1	4/21	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	4/22	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1*	5/04	Pine Canyon	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
*unusual location					
Black-throated Gray warbler	1m	3/07	RGV-Gambusia pond	Christina Rinas	rare
	1m	3/28	Terlingua Creek	Mark Flippo	rare
Blackburnian Warbler	1f	3/08	RGV campground	Ned & Teddy Schuler	acc.
	1f	5/03	Sam Nail Ranch	Sharon Genqux	acc.
Graces' warbler	1f	5/02	Juniper Flat	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
Prothonotary Warbler	1	4/25	RGV-campground	David Elkowitz	acc.
Worm-eating Warbler	1	4/02	RGV-store	Colette Lassberg	rare
	1	5/07	Dugout Wells	Laurie Skillman	rare
Ovenbird	1	5/03	Basin campground	Robert Quinn	rare
Kentucky warbler	1	5/02	Laguna Mdw Tr.	Sandie Timmer	acc.
Hooded warbler	1	5/07	Dugout Wells	Laurie Skillman	rare
Painted redstart	1	3/25	Boot Canyon	Marty Kelly	spo.
	2	3/28	Boot Spring	Steve & Tina Ehrman	spo.
	2	4/09	Boot Spring	Alec Rhodes	spo.
	1	4/15	Boot Canyon	Sean Fitzgerald	spo.
	1	4/27	Boot Canyon	Rene Laubach	spo.
	2	4/29	Boot Canyon	Mark Flippo	spo.
Baird's sparrow	1	3/10	RGV-RV park	C. Bednarczyk	early
	1	4/27	Panther Junction	Rob & Angie Dean	rare
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1m	4/22	RGV-Daniels Rch	Steve Nicholson	rare

	1m	4/28	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	5/03	Green Gulch mp 3	Sandie Timmer	rare
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Lazuli bunting	1m	4/14	Rte 13 mp 13.5	Joe Turner	rare
	1m	4/28	Santa Elena Cyn	J&D Swant	rare
	2m,f	4/28	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	2m,f	5/04	Santa Elena Cyn	Carpenter & Burnett	rare
	1m	5/09	Panther Junction	Angie Dean	rare
Hooded oriole	1-2m	4/15-28	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	5/01	RGV-Daniels Rch	Mark Flippo	rare
Baltimore oriole	1m	4/02	RGV-group camp	Curt Prudhomme	acc.

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period March 1 - May 31. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?spr" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the spring season.

#### Spring Season: General Weather Patterns

In terms of rainfall, the spring season was erratic. The dry trend of the winter was relieved by several cold and wet fronts that moved through the region in mid-March, only to see dry conditions return through the month of April. The peak of migration at the end of April and the first week of May seemed to be on track for a typical hot and dry run, with temperatures soaring to well over a hundred for days on end. Conditions turned around completely however by mid-May with intense storms bringing extreme winds and heavy rainfall.

A comparison of year-to-date rainfall with the same time frame in 2008(+ or -) along with May precipitation totals shows the recovery from drought conditions.

<u>Station</u>	<u>YTD Precip</u>	<u>Change from '08</u>	<u>May '09 precip.</u>
Panther Junction	2.80"	+0.71"	1.87"
Chisos Basin	2.82"	+0.70"	1.98"
Rio Grande Vill.	2.85"	+1.94"	1.19"
Castolon	3.52"	+1.59"	3.03"
Persimmon Gap	4.61"	+1.70"	3.38"

#### Spring Season: The Birds

Three review species were reported this spring season: A pair of **white-eared hummingbirds** reported at Rio Grande Village campground on April 20 was very unusual both in time and location. All other park records are from late summer/early fall and at higher elevation. An early May report of two **ruddy ground-doves** was an apparent one-day wonder along the road to Daniels Ranch at Rio Grande Village. Also in early May a calling *Myiarchus* flycatcher just below Pinnacles Pass was identified as a  **dusky-capped flycatcher**. Reports have been submitted for all three species to the Texas Bird Records Committee and are pending review.

**Other highlights:** The period between the last week of April through the first week of May saw a definite peak in activity, with a diversity of species falling out in various locations in the park. Not coincidentally this was during a major heat and dry spell, as birds took refuge in traditional migrant traps like Dugout Wells, Sam Nail Ranch, and the cooler regions of the high Chisos. Vireos, warblers, and buntings were particularly abundant at this time. The river access at Cottonwood Campground became a popular vantage point for birders during this period as mixed flocks of flycatchers, warblers, Spizella sparrows (chipping, clay-colored, Brewer's), and Passerina buntings (indigo, lazuli, painted, and varied) all gathered to bathe in the shallow riffle of water pretending to be the Rio Grande.

Colima warblers arrived on time in early April to join at least one pair of painted redstarts in Boot Canyon, and proved to be relatively easy to locate by song and call. A common black-hawk pair returned to the traditional nest

site at Rio Grande Village, as did two pair of gray hawks at Daniels Ranch and Cottonwood Campground. At this writing all are on nest and appear to be with nestlings. Finally, researchers performed the annual black-capped vireo survey at the end of May and report preliminary count totals of 36 territorial males and 6 females.